DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 197 258 CG 014 901

AUTHOR Taylor, Priscilla D.
TITLE Black Professional Women's (Teachers and Airline Stewardesses) Attitudes Toward Marriage and Family.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 68p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Age Differences: *Black Attitudes: Blacks: *Family Life: *Females: Intermarriage: *Marriage: *Mate Selection: Parent Attitudes: Professional Personnel: Questionnaires: *Sex Role: Socioeconomic Status

ABSTRACT

At present, only incomplete data exist on how black professional women view marriage: more complete information could provide insights into the causes of the increased number of single and divorced black women. To determine the attitudes of middle-class black women, respondents in Detroit and Chicago were administered a questionnaire designed to measure their feelings about mate selection, the black woman's role in marriage, the importance of sex and children, the "economics" of marriage, and the advantages and disadvantages of marriage. Findings indicate that most middle-class black women, whether married or unmarried, prefer to marry financially well-established men, and are committed to maintaining their identity and independence. These women value parenthood, but feel that family planning is essential: most agree that legalized abortion is necessary. The majority also recognize the child's right to question parental decisions about childrearing practices. (Author/CS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED197254

BLACK PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S (TEACHERS AND AIRLINE STEWARDESSES) ATTITUDES TOWARD MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

BY

PRISCILLA D. TAYLOR

Isabelle C. O'Keeffe Elementary School
Chicago, Illinois 60649

CG 014961

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Priscilla D. Taylor

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

INTRODUCTION

Marriage and the family are traditional institutions generally accepted as stabilizing factors in the socialization process designed to perpetuate the American value system. Recent trends have caused concern among some observers as to whether these institutions can remain vital forces in upholding a historically acceptable way of life in a rapidly changing society. Of particular interest is the role of the woman as wife, homemaker, and mother.

Women have proliferated the job market all the way to the top and have begun to displace men who formerly monopolized executive positions in industry and the professions. The increasing demands of women for equal rights in the marriage arrangement, the rise of feminist organizations giving strong support to dissident females in the home and the apparent decline of the male as traditional "head of the family" are viewed by some as threats to the survival of society as we have known it for several centuries. There are others who see no change in the social structure that has not occurred at some time in our past.

As early as the middle of the nineteenth century, anthropologists advanced theories regarding the establishment of the nuclear family. What is it, and how did it evolve? In Bonner, Hill and Wilber (1960),

the anthropological findings of Edvard Westermarck are cited, and the accepted conclusion has held that "...pair marriages, or monogamy (one man to one woman), had existed from earliest times... (and)...the family has always been the basic social unit" (p. 79). These observations were made public during the early period of the twentieth century and remained the focal point of subsequent references to "family" as a social entity.

Male and female roles in the family are undergoing change, and there is some speculation that the government will soon adopt some form of national policy regarding family life including child rearing practices once thought to be the exclusive right of parents to decide. These factors plus the decision of many married couples to forego parenthood in order to conform to the ideals of zero population growth or to pursue their own personal interests are matters that may affect family survival in the future.

That these concerns are widely shared is substantiated by Moroney (1979), who states:

> Interest in the family has produced a loose coalition of individuals and organizations drawn together under the rubric of family policy coordination...such concern might be beneficial to families (and) any actions by this group need to be closely monitored. One of the problems is that terms are usually ill-defined, including the

concept of "family" (p. 461).

The continued statement cites the "assumptions of researchers and policy makers" as they attempt to define and bring order to the trends which are contributing to "weakened" and "deteriorating families." They see a need for national policy development to bring the family traditions back to a place of former prominence.

One may view a family's strength as existing when unity and stability are present in the form of both parents in the home with the children born to those parents. Divorce, separation, illegitimacy and death are realities that often prevent this concept of "stable family" from being maintained. The terminology again needs clarification. When is a family a family, and what do researchers consider a stable family to be? Do the demographers support the same definition?

Farley and Hermalin (1971) offer this definition:

> A stable family system is one in which adults marry and live with their spouses, in their own household and in which children are born into and raised in such a household... [Data that would enable households in the United States to be classified as "stable" or "unstable" according to this definition are not available] (p. 2).

Of the possible indicators of family instability based on the above

definition, demographic trends may give a clue to the validity of observers' concerns. Demographic figures show an increase in the number of illegitimate children born in the United States and a concurrent decrease in the size of the family, or a decrease in the number of children being born as a part of the nuclear family. This trend implies a decrease in family stability.

If the number of children born out of wedlock is an indication of family instability, further studies would show that the non-white population has greater family instability than their white counterparts. The non-white population of 25,462,951 in 1970 included 22,580,289 blacks. Based on this information, it appears that blacks are the people who suffer the greatest incidence of family instability. Whether they perceive themselves as incomplete or unstable because of the state of birth of their children is not clear. There is no evidence to support such self-perceptions among blacks at this time.

Within the contexts of family stability and marital dissolution, it is apparent and substantiated in the literature that black women are more dissatisfied in marriage than white women and are thought to be heirs to a history of deeply rooted hostility between black women and black men.

During an interview, Poussaint (1977) referred to the historian, Bennett, regarding possible factors.

> There has been antagonism between black men and black women for years...(it) goes back to the destruction of the political and economic power of black men who could not protect and provide for their women....What we have to deal with, therefore, is 400 years of systematic assault on the black family, the black male and the black female (pp. 160-162).

Thus, the black woman has been "conditioned" to view the black man as "unreliable, untrustworthy and insecure" (Poussaint, 1977). She still maintains that she is exploited by the black man as much today as she was before the feminist movement began (Tucker, 1980), a movement black women have not wholeheartedly supported (Hare and Hare, 1974). However, many black women obviously approve of role changes that have been occurring over the last two decades (Becquaert, 1976).

The black woman's role as homemaker, mother and ego support for her husband has undergone a change that some observers and theorists connect to the decline of morals they claim is developing. Demographic research attests to increased crime rates, delinquency and other social ills, but the question of whether these are caused by the changing roles of women (black or white) or whether women's attitudes and values have changed as a result of the social forces

mentioned and not mentioned here are matters for continued research.

Another area of concern prompted by demographic studies is the rise in divorce rates and decline in the number of marriages and remarriages (see Appendix II). Although the illustration includes all races, it is evident in the literature that black women have a unique position in the social trends. They are "single longer...take early and continuous responsibility for...their families and are at the bottom of any economic scale one might devise" (Becquaert, 1976, p. 67).

Significance of the Study

The "liberation" of females during the last two decades did not exclude black females. The trends toward equal responsibility in all areas of marriage, including reversal of the traditional male/female roles inside and outside the home, have caused some black women to delay marriage or to seek alternatives to the marital state according to Tucker (1980). The demands of marriage and the demands of work outside the home have taken their toll on the women of all races, and futurists predict even more women will leave the home either to fight the encroachments of inflation into their way of life or to satisfy desires left unrealized through the institution of marriage.

Blood (1972) and other researchers have noted that although the black woman has been prominent in the rise of the black family to

middle class status in the United States, her role has been bi-leveled. She has often taken an outside-the-home job in order to supplement her husband's income and has performed all the duties expected as a homemaker. She has attended to the needs of her mate in the normal requirements of the marriage contract and has been the person most responsible for the rearing of the children. These role functions are undergoing change with the entry of more women, black and white, into the job market.

In families where both parents work, there may be little time for interaction among the parents and children on a daily basis. Some parents with very young children are gone from the home for long hours, from morning until night, while maintaining jobs or professional careers. Children are thus left to be reared by parent surrogates. The nuclear family as we have always known it may not survive the increased divorce rates, decline of re-marriages, lack of commitment of one or both partners in the marriage and the chance of younger people, who observe the failures of their parents and others, to avoid the same errors by remaining single.

A panoramic view of the state of the nation's households in their choices of lifestyle was presented recently in the news media. On the basis of 100 per cent as a total, it was determined that 13% of the population represented the "ideal" family of a mother, father

and child; 30% were childless couples; 21% were working parents; 21% were single; 8% were single parents; 1.5% were cohabiting couples, and 5.5% were designated as "others."

> The percentages listed here are of households. In the case of couples living together unmarried, who are counted as households but not families, the 1.1 million couples...(figure) was divided by the number of households. The result was 1.5% (Chicago Tribune, Jan. 20, 1980).

The U.S. Census Bureau makes no distinction as to what constitutes "family", only "households". Such depersonalization of people is not new, but could increase as families continue to disintegrate. Since blacks make up roughly 10% of families in the United States, it is important to note the possible impact these tendencies have on the total society, particularly those tendencies that may affect the future survival of the American way of life, and blacks as an ethnic group.

Incomplete data are available as to how professional black women view marriage. Such information would not only add to the state of knowledge, but would provide insight into the cause of the seeming increase in the number of single and divorced black women.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes of black females toward marriage and the family.

Questions to be Answered

The general questions of the study to be answered are as follows:

Group I: Mate selection - What are the criteria for marriage?

Group II: Finance - Is economics a factor in marriage?

Group III: Expectations - What does the black woman look for in a marriage?

Group IV: Marital roles - How does the black woman perceive her role in the marriage?

Group V: Sex - What is the importance of sexual relations in marriage?

Group VI: Children - What is the importance of children in marriage?

In addition to these general questions, the instrument contains specific questions regarding the respondents' feelings toward interracial marriage.

Procedure of the Study

Population and Sample

From the population of black women residing in Chicago and Detroit, an available sample of 100 was selected for the study. The women were 18 years old and older, born in the United States and representative of middle class professionals.

Data Collection

The opinionnaire was administered to 50 black women in each of two cities--Detroit and Chicago. The group was directed to respond to best reflected personal beliefs for each of the 40 questions. The scale of opinions included responses of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Instrument

An opinionnaire consisting of 40 questions was devised using the Likert Method of Summated Ratings. Statements on the opinionnaire were designed to assess the attitudes of black women toward marriage and the family. An open ended question was provided for any comment the respondent chose regarding this issue.

Limitations

The study's findings are subject to the following limitations:

1. The opinionnaire may lack validity and reliability.
2. The study group may not answer truthfully.

3. The findings are applicable only to the sample.
4. Findings in the study may not be conclusive evidence of any trend or tendency.

Assumptions

It is assumed that:

1. The opinionnaire is valid and reliable.
2. The respondents will check answers that reflect their true feelings.
3. The sample group is representative of a larger group which shares similar opinions.
4. The sample group is representative of middle class populations.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this paper, the following definitions are to be understood.

Black woman: Any female born in the United States of Negro ancestry who bears the social categorization of "black".

Marriage: The legal bond of man and woman as husband and wife.

Black middle class: That segment of the black population representing professional, para-professional

and skilled workers with annual incomes of $13,000 and over.

Attitudes: Scores obtained on the opinionnaire.

Treatment of Data

Opinions toward marriage measured by responses on questionnaires will be tallied according to the number of responses to each rating on the Likert Scale. Data will be tabulated in terms of percentage of total responses to each statement and then to each category of general questions.

Analysis of the data will include reporting any preponderance of comments made to any single test item or specific categorical question. Chi square will be used to determine the statistical significance of the responses at the .05 level of confidence.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This study was undertaken to determine the attitudes of middle class black women toward marriage and the family. An available sample of 100 women in Detroit and Chicago were requested to complete an opinionnaire of 40 questions relating to marriage and children of marriages. Responses to the questions were rated on the Lickert Scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Ninety-four of the women responded and their answers were tabulated. The two levels of agree and disagree were merged for reporting purposes.

Questions encompassed the categories of mate selection, economics in the marriage, the advantages and disadvantages of marriage, marital roles, sexual relations in the marriage and the importance of children in marriages. An open-ended question was placed at the end of the opinionnaire for respondents to comment and/or qualify answers to specific questions.

Whenever possible, informal interviews were held. The subject generated much interest and led to the belief that women want to air their views concerning their marital problems. The respondents were asked to note their views in the space on the opinionnaire designated for the open-ended question. Other interview notes were

maintained by the researcher, and remarks appear in the discussion section of this paper.

The Tables reflect the general categories of questions, the first of which was mate selection. Specific statements requiring agreement or disagreement precede each table. Responses were tabulated in percentages according to age of the respondent and marital state. Age groups were established for the 18 to 25 year-olds, 26 to 35 year-olds, and those 36 years old and older. Marital groups were classified in terms of single, married and separated, divorced or widowed.

Table I shows that the majority of middle class black women think couples need not belong to the same race or religion in order to marry. In the 18 to 25 age group, 81% disagreed with the statement on race, and 75% disagreed with the statement regarding religion. In the 26 to 35 year-old age group, the percentages were lower with 63% disagreeing on race and 61% disagreeing on religion. The 36 year-old and older group was found to disagree by 65% on race and only 49% on religion, slightly less than a majority. These responses were compared to the question as to whether the individual would marry someone outside her own race. The 18 to 25-year-old group responses were 44% agree, 25% undecided and 31% disagreed. In the 26 to 35 group, 32% agreed, 19% were undecided and 49% disagreed. The older group agreed with a 40% positive reply; 22% were undecided

TABLE I

CRITERIA FOR MATE SELECTION
(Reported in Percentages)

	Age									Marital Status								
	18-25 N-16			26-35 N-41			36 & Older N-37			Single N-25			Married N-32			Div/Sep Widowed N-26		
	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D
Couples who marry should belong to the same race.	13	6	81*	27	10	63*	22	13	65*	20	8	72*	28	9	63*	19	12	69*
Couples who marry should share the same religion.	19	6	75*	15	24	61*	40	11	49	24	8	68*	16	21	63*	39	15	46
Differences in social class should not be a factor when a woman chooses a marital partner.	44	12	44	24	20	56*	19	19	62*	48	0	52	21	21	58*	15	23	62*
Black women prefer to marry men whose social class standing is higher than their own.	37	19	44	*47	24	29	41	19	40	*52	16	32	37	21	42	*42	27	31
You would marry a man whose social standing is lower than your own.	31	31	38	19	15	66*	27	24	49*	28	36*	26	26	21	53*	19	12	69*
Black women tend to ignore the occupation of prospective marital partners.	37	0	63*	10	12	78*	19	5	76*	4	28	68*	23	7	70*	12	0	88*
You would ignore the occupation of a prospective marital partner.	19	0	81*	7	10	83*	14	5	81*	4	8	88*	9	7	84*	12	11	77*
You would marry a person other than one of your own race.	44	25	31	32	19	49*	40	22	38	36	32	32	40	11	49	38	27	35

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

and 38% disagreed.

Responses according to marital status followed a similar pattern, with 72% of all single respondents disagreeing with the statement involving race and 68% disagreeing with the shared religion statement. The married group disagreed with both statements with a 63% margin, and the husband absent group disagreed with the race statement by 69% with the religion statement. (The findings were statistically significant.)

To the statement on personal or individual choice, the single group agreed with a 36% showing; 32% were undecided and 32% disagreed. Forty per cent of the married persons agreed; 11% were not sure and 49% disagreed. Those who were separated, divorced or widowed agreed by a 38% margin; 27% were unsure and 35% disagreed.

It is apparent from these figures that black women view racial and religious differences as no obstacle to marriage, but there is an indication of selectivity present in the personal preferences of the individuals regarding race. While 81% of the 18 to 25 year-old group disagreed that racial sameness was desirable, only 44% of the same group agreed that they would marry someone of a different race, a 37% disparity.

Social class as a factor in mate selection received varying opinions that seem to indicate no significant agreement among the

persons in the youngest group with increasing disagreement in each successive age group. Again, how black women perceive the selection criterion in general and how they feel it applies to them personally differ. While only 47% of the 26-35 year-old women agreed that black women prefer to marry men of higher social standing, 66% would not marry a man of lower status than their own.

Occupational status received responses heavily in favor of this particular criterion as a factor in mate selection. The marital status data again are in agreement with the age group data on most items in both social class standing and occupation of prospective marital partners. In response to personal preference regarding social class, 53% of the married group would not marry below their social class level; 68% of the single group do not think black women ignore occupational status of the male, and 88% disagreed with the statement, "You would ignore the occupation of a prospective marital partner." It appears that middle class black women give considerable attention to the social position of a prospective partner.

The questions related to economics in marriage were designed to determine if middle class black women marry to achieve financial security or if the rewards of a successful career held greater appeal than a marriage with a financially established mate. The women responded to statements regarding how they perceived the attitudes of black males toward their black wives' career achievements and how

important financial security is when compared to companionship in the marriage.

Although one of the statements referred only to a "sense of security," the implication can be construed as financial or psychological. It was used in this study in the economic sense and was located in the series of statements relating to the economic factors in marriage as listed in Table II.

Also of note in the table are the responses to the statements related to the current issue of working wives and to the "self-realization" factor, both of which are receiving considerable attention among sociologists.

The data in Table II indicate that middle class black women view marriage as a means of acquiring a secure lifestyle. Over 50% of the women in the 18 to 25 year-old group responded positively to the statements that men should propose only after achieving financial stability and marriage should provide a greater sense of security for women. Positive responses in the over 50% range were also found in all age and marital status groups with two exceptions. Married women agreed that men should be financially stable before marriage by a 47% margin. Forty-four per cent disagreed, and 9% were unsure. To the statement involving an overall "greater sense of security," 75% of the married women agreed; 2% were undecided and 23% disagreed. In the oldest age group, 49% agreed that men should be economically

TABLE II

ECONOMICS IN MARRIAGE
(Reported in Percentages)

	Age									Marital Status								
	18-25			26-35			36 & Older			Single			Married			Div/Sep Widowed		
	N-16			N-41			N-37			N-25			N-43			N-26		
	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D
A man should propose marriage only after he has achieved financial stability.	50	6	44	*54	7	39	49	11	40	*60	4	36	47	9	44	*50	12	38
Black men resent the successful career achievements of their Black wives.	*50	19	31	*42	29	29	*65	13	22	*48	28	24	*47	21	32	*66	15	19
Companionship is more important than financial security in a marriage.	*56	13	31	20	24	56*	30	22	48*	40	20	40	25	12	63*	27	38	35
Working wives have less chance of succeeding at their marriages than those who are <u>not</u> employed outside the home.	0	6	94*	5	2	93*	16	3	81*	8	0	92*	2	2	96*	19	4	77*
<u>You</u> would sacrifice a successful career in order to marry an apparently successful (financially stable) man.	6	31	63*	22	17	61*	*51	22	27	24	48*	28	30	21	49*	39	15	46
Marriage should give a woman a greater sense of security.	*50	25	25	*68	5	27	*81	3	16	*64	20	16	*75	2	23	*73	4	23
There is greater self-realisation in having a successful marriage than in having a successful career.	13	56*	31	20	17	63*	27	29	54*	20	36	44*	19	14	67*	27	19	54*

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

established; 11% were undecided and 40% disagreed.

To the statement regarding companionship and financial security, 56% of the youngest age group agreed, but 56% of the 26 to 35 year-old group disagreed as did 48% of the oldest group. To the same statement, 40% of the singles agreed, and 40% disagreed. Sixty-three per cent of the married group seemed to believe financial security is more important than companionship, and the divorced, separated or widowed group responded positively with 27% agreeing, 38% undecided and 35% disagreeing.

The "working wives" statement yielded very decisive opinions. Middle class black women disagreed in the following percentages: single persons, 92%; married persons, 96%; and separated/divorced or widowed women, 77%. Age groups responded similarly with 94% of the youngest group disagreeing; 93% of the 26 to 35 year-old group and 81% of the 36 year-old and older group also disagreed.

The data on the concept of self-realization evolving through either a successful career or a successful marriage showed that only 13% of the 18 to 25 year-olds believed marriage provides such an opportunity; 56% were undecided and 31% disagreed. In the second age group, 20% agreed that a successful marriage offers more toward self-realization than does a successful career; 17% were undecided, and 63% disagreed; while 27% of the oldest group agreed, 19% were

not sure and 54% disagreed. These findings seem to indicate that the women in the older age groups preferred marriage as a means of self-realization or identity rather than a career, but attention should be re-focused on the youngest age group which apparently would not sacrifice a successful career (63%) in order to marry a financially stable man. The discrepancy may exist in the interpretation of self-realization, and it is a point for later discussion.

Table III lists seven statements designed to determine whether the respondents in this study still regard marriage as beneficial to their physical and mental health and whether they believe the future will show a decline in the number of black women who marry.

The first two statements deal with the decision of women to marry at a particular age and the amount of time felt as needed to prepare for marriage once the decision was made. The literature supports the view of some observers who see a tendency for women to delay marriage for various reasons. Observers also have noted that some couples have sought alternatives to marriage. One such alternative is cohabitation, and the third statement provides the study group an opportunity to respond to that alternative.

Whether marriage contributes to improved physical and mental health are the subjects of the fourth and fifth statements on this Table, and the sixth deals with whether these women think marriage interferes with the individual's personal freedom.

TABLE III

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MARRIAGE
(Reported in Percentages)

	Age									Marital Status								
	18-25			26-35			36 & Older			Single			Married			Div/Sep Widowed		
	N-16			N-41			N-37			N-25			N-43			N-26		
	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D
All women should marry before the age of thirty if they intend to marry at all.	19	6	75*	17	2	81*	22	8	70*	20	8	71*	21	2	77*	15	8	77*
Couples should have an engagement period of at least six months before they marry.	38	6	56*	49	7	44	*65	5	30	44	16	40	*56	2	42	*58	4	38
Living together <u>may</u> be a better arrangement than getting married.	*63	0	37	27	22	51*	30	11	59*	36	12	52	33	21	46*	34	8	58*
Marriage contributes to better physical health in women.	37	0	63*	29	24	47*	41	27	32	20	28	52*	28	33	39*	42	19	39
Marriage contributes to better mental health in women.	6	38	56*	34	22	44*	32	35	33	28	36	36	30	30	40*	31	23	46*
You would choose not to (re)marry because you prize your freedom.	19	19	62*	17	34	49*	33	24	43*	4	48	48*	37	19	44	15	27	58*
The future will show a decline in the number of black women who choose to marry.	*44	37	19	*39	34	27	*54	19	27	36	36	28	*51	19	30	*46	35	19

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

It was felt that this set of questions would reveal how middle class black women perceive marriage as a traditional social institution and whether they view marriage as a good choice in the future.

Respondents in all groups disagreed by wide margins that women should marry before the age of thirty. All percentages reported exceeded 70%.

To the statement involving an engagement period for couples planning to marry, the youngest age group showed the highest level of disagreement (56%) and agreed that living together might be a better arrangement than marriage (63%), while 38% agreed that an engagement period was desirable, and 37% disagreed with the concept of cohabitation as an alternative to marriage. Sixty-three per cent of this group did not believe marriage contributes to better mental health, and 62% would not rule out marriage or choose not to remarry because of a possible loss of individual freedom by so doing. Forty-four per cent of this group agreed that the future will show a decline in the number of black women who choose to marry.

Fifty-one per cent of the 26-35 year-old age group did not agree with the cohabitation statement. Similarly, 59% of the 36 year-olds and older group apparently do not approve of live-in arrangements, an indication that the more mature women show a preference for the legalized marital state as opposed to cohabitation.

Forty-nine per cent of the 26-35 year-old group also disagreed with the concept that individual freedom is curtailed by marriage, as did 43% of the oldest group.

The 26-35 group agreed that marriage for black women will decline in the future by a 39% margin. The oldest age group agreed by a higher majority of 54%.

Single women were divided in responding to the statement on an engagement period. Forty-four per cent disagreed and 40% disagreed. A majority of this group (52%) disavowed cohabitation as an alternative to marriage and did not see marriage as contributing to better physical health, and 36% did not view marriage as a factor in improved mental health. The single women (48%) were undecided as to whether they would rule out marriage at the cost of their individual freedom, and 48% rejected the idea of sacrificing freedom by marrying.

Of the married women, 56% agreed with the engagement statement; 33% responded positively to cohabitation, but 44% disagreed, and 51% believed marriage for black women will decline in the future.

Women who are divorced, separated or widowed approved of an engagement period (58%), did not accept cohabitation (58%), and disagreed by a 58% margin that they would choose not to remarry because of a possible loss of individual freedom. Forty-six per cent concurred in the belief that there will be a future numerical decline

in black females who will marry.

In all groups, a majority of the respondents agreed that few of them will be marrying in the years to come.

Table IV provides insight into middle class black women's perceived roles in marriage. There are eight statements pertaining to the role of the woman as wife, mother and female individual with separate interests and goals apart from the male's interests.

The traditionalism of the wife as homemaker and the male as head of the household has undergone changes as the literature and demographic studies have shown. Whether the trends have been more or less pronounced in black marriages, particularly among the middle class blacks, is a subject of this paper.

Included in the list of statements is a specific reference to the women's liberation movement and its effect on the attitudes of black women of middle class status. Also in the list of declarations is one which deals with the woman's opinion concerning recreation apart from the husband or family. The statement was included because of evidence in the literature that decision-making responsibilities for family recreational activities is an important factor in marital relations.

The ability or willingness of respondents to provide ego support in marriage is questioned as is the individual woman's readiness in asserting her personal strengths beyond her husband's whenever necessary. The inference that black women are negligent in this area

TABLE IV

THE ROLES OF MIDDLE CLASS BLACK WOMEN IN THE MARRIAGE
(Reported in Percentages)

	Age									Marital Status								
	18-25			26-35			36 & Older			Single			Married			Div/Sep Widowed		
	N-16			N-41			N-37			N-25			N-43			N-26		
	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D
Individual interests should be of secondary importance to shared interests in a marriage.	31	13	56*	32	12	56*	*54	11	35	40	8	52*	32	19	49*	*62	4	34
If married, you would assert your personal strength beyond your partner's when it appears that he is incapable of coping with a problem or making a decision.	*63	37	0	*85	5	10	*84	8	8	*68	4	28	*88	5	7	*85	11	4
Where the traditional family unit of husband, wife and child/children exists, the man should be the head of the family.	*69	6	25	*68	5	27	*59	11	30	*64	4	32	*70	5	25	*58	11	31
You would adjust to your husband's personality rather than maintain your own identity in order to make your marriage work.	6	19	75*	0	2	98*	19	13	68*	4	8	88*	7	14	79*	11	4	85*
Marriages should have well defined sex roles.	*50	19	31	36	10	54*	49	8	43	36	24	40	42	5	53*	*54	8	38
Recent trends in the 'liberation' of the female from traditional sex roles have confused the black woman's sense of direction in establishing and maintaining successful (happy) marital relations.	0	31	69*	24	12	64*	16	19	65*	8	24	68*	19	16	65*	19	15	66*
The traditional role of woman as homemaker is 'passe'.	*50	12	38	46	17	37	49	8	43	48	8	44	*53	14	33	42	19	39
Marital partners should take separate vacations at least once every two or three years.	*94	6	0	41	27	32	*48	22	30	*68	8	24	44	23	33	*50	31	19

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

may be upheld by the findings.

The findings showed that the two younger groups with almost identical percentages (56%) did not believe their individual interests should be superseded by shared interests in the marriage. However, the third age group (36 and older) agreed by 54%. When compared to the marital status variable, similar results appeared. Fifty-two per cent of the single group disagreed, 49% married disagreed, and of the widowed, divorced or separated group, 62% agreed. The fact that the oldest group is also the major portion of the husband-absent group probably accounts for their majority agreement.

All respondents replied positively to the statement related to the assertion of their personal strengths in the absence of the husband's coping ability. The largest percentages were shown for the middle groups in both variables, with the youngest and the single groups responding less positively (63% and 68% compared to over 80% for all other groups).

The responses to the question of who should head the nuclear family showed that the majority of women preferred to have the male fulfill that role.

Responses to the personality adjustment factor showed that these women would not adjust or change their personalities to make their marriages work. The 26 to 35 age group overwhelmingly rejected the concept (98%), and 88% of all single respondents concurred in the

rejection.

The women also disagreed with the contention that they have been confused by the female liberation movement. Most women who discussed the statement replied that they have always felt liberated since their roles have been bi-leveled throughout their lives. All groups responded negatively above the 60% margin.

There was general agreement among all groups that the traditional role of women as homemakers is a thing of the past. Implied in their responses is the shared responsibility in the home as well as in the roles of providers. The single group was divided in its response. Forth-eight per cent agreed that the historical pattern of woman in the home and man on the job is no longer a social reality, but 44% apparently are holding on to the concept as an ideal.

The tendency of young and single groups to value a sense of individualism and the freedom to pursue personal interests is again supported in the study by a 94% positive response to separate vacations for marital partners. The married group was less definitive. Forty-four per cent agreed and 33% disagreed. There were no other major responses, except for a 50% agree response from the separated, divorced or widowed group.

All groups denied the concept of well-defined sex roles in a marriage, a finding that may be interpreted as a desire of the middle class black woman to maintain an equality of sex role functions in a

marriage as well as a separate ego identity.

Table V shows responses to questions regarding the importance of sex in marriages. There are five specific questions which reveal the opinions of middle class black women on sex as a marital activity, the value placed on the activity as a factor in marital relations and whether the women in the study view sex as an act of love or an act that may be devoid of emotional commitment.

The final two questions relate to faithfulness in the marriage. Whether a spouse is willing to forgive infidelity may be crucial to the harmonious continuity of a marriage. It is assumed that the unfaithful act has been discovered in order for forgiveness to take place.

From the data, it appears that the women in this study were unified in their opinions of the importance of sex in marriage. Comparing responses made by the youngest group to the two "sexual compatibility" questions, it was found that all respondents shared the opinion that sex is neither the least nor the most important factor in marriage. The lowest percentage tabulated was for the 36 year-old and older group (68%) in its negative response to sex being the "most important factor". This particular group responded negatively to sex as being the "least important factor" with a higher percentage showing (86%). Similarly, the separated, divorced or widowed group disagreed with the first statement (73%) and 85% of this group

TABLE V

IMPORTANCE OF SEX IN THE MARRIAGE
(Reported in Percentages)

	Age									Marital Status								
	18-25			26-35			36 & Older			Single			Married			Div/Sep Widowed		
	N-16			N-41			N-37			N-25			N-43			N-26		
	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D
Sexual compatibility is the most important factor in a successful marriage.	12	0	88*	7	7	86*	24	8	68*	4	4	92*	14	9	77*	23	4	73*
Sexual compatibility is the least important factor in a successful marriage.	6	0	94*	2	15	83*	3	11	86*	0	8	92*	7	9	84*	0	15	85*
Making love and having sexual intercourse are the same thing.	6	0	94*	5	2	93*	3	3	94*	8	4	88*	2	2	96*	4	0	96*
You believe that a man's extra-marital sexual activities should be overlooked by his wife.	0	12	88*	2	5	93*	6	5	89*	4	0	96*	2	7	91*	4	8	88*
A wife's extra-marital sexual activities should be overlooked by her husband.	6	6	88*	2	8	90*	6	5	89*	8	0	92*	2	9	89*	4	8	88*

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

disagreed with "least important factor".

There was also total disagreement on equating love-making and sexual intercourse. Eighty-eight per cent of the single women disagreed as did 96% of the married and 96% of the separated, divorced, widowed group. Ninety-four per cent of the youngest age group disagreed; 93% of the 26-35 year-old women disagreed, and 94% of the oldest age group had the same opinion.

Regarding marital fidelity, all groups answered negatively to the statements that extramarital sex on the part of either spouse should be overlooked by either partner.

Table VI shows responses related to parenthood and child-rearing. There seems to be diversity of opinion as to whether children add stability to a marriage. Sixty-nine per cent of the first age group (18-25) disagreed; 41% of the 26 to 35 year-olds and 54% of the oldest group also disagreed. Forty-four per cent of the single women, 46% of the married group and 58% of the separated, divorced or widowed group disagreed.

Most of the respondents agreed that planned parenthood is beneficial for society, but fewer believe that legalized abortion is a "blessing". Of the married group, 77% believed in planned parenthood, but only 51% agreed with the legalized abortion statement. Seventy-two per cent of the single women agreed with the concept of planned parenthood, but only half of that number (36%) agreed with

TABLE VI

IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN IN THE MARRIAGE
(Reported in Percentages)

	Age									Marital Status								
	18-25			26-35			36 & Older			Single			Married			Div/Sep Widowed		
	N-16			N-41			N-37			N-25			N-43			N-16		
	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D	A	U	D
Children tend to add stability to a marriage.	19	12	69*	42	17	41	27	19	54*	28	28	44*	40	14	46	31	11	58*
Planned parenthood is 'good' for society.	*88	0	12	*71	17	12	*70	14	16	*72	8	20	*77	11	12	*69	19	12
The government should mandate the number of children a couple can have.	19	0	81*	7	0	93*	0	8	92	0	12	88*	0	9	91*	0	8	92*
Legalized abortion is a blessing.	31	38	31	*59	24	17	*57	22	21	36	36	28	*51	28	21	*77	11	12
When both husband and wife are working, the raising of a family should be deferred until one parent can remain in the home.	37	19	44	10	17	73*	32	11	57*	32	24	44*	5	9	86*	46	15	39
Children should have the right to question their parent's decisions.	*75	12	13	*59	12	29	*62	8	30	*68	4	28	*53	19	28	*73	4	23

*Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

the abortion concept. The separated, divorced and widowed group agreed to both statements by larger margins. Sixty-nine per cent agreed with the planned parenthood statement, and 77% of this group believed legalized abortion is a blessing.

To the statement related to mandatory governmental control of the number of children couples may produce, all groups disagreed by significant percentages.

The question of whether children should be raised in families where both parents may be absent for most of the day due to employment outside the home received little unified opinion in any group except the married women, 86% of whom disagreed with the statement; 73% of the 26 to 35 year-old group also disagreed.

Eighty-six per cent of the married group disagreed with the idea of deferring parenthood even though both parents might be employed outside the home at the same time. Seventy-three per cent of the 26-35 age group also disagreed, as did 57% of the oldest age group. Divorced, separated and widowed groups gave inconclusive opinions, while 86% of the married group disagreed.

Apparently, middle class black women believe children have a right to question the parents' decisions. Seventy-five per cent of the 18 to 25 year-olds agreed, as did 59% of the 26 to 35 year-olds and 62% of the 36 year-old and older groups. Among the marital status groups, 68% of the singles agreed, as did 53% of the married women

and 73% of the separated, divorced or widowed women.

Many women used the open-ended question to express personal views beyond the limited and broad statements on the opinionnaire. These remarks may provide additional insight into the attitudes of the women in the study. In order to classify the particular variable into which the particular respondent was included, the age and marital status were coded with a number for age and S for single, M for married, and SDW for separated, divorced or widowed.

(27S) Companionship and financial security are of equal importance in marriage.

An insecure financial marriage will be the cause of many problems.

(39S) Black females have always been liberated. We have always had to maintain a greater amount of independence to survive.

I don't see how it (infidelity) can be overlooked unless both partners have agreed that this is the type of relationship on which the marriage is based.

(25M) I married someone from a lower class. It can cause problems but should not be a factor in marriage plans.

A lot of women are not career minded.

(18S) A better term for legalized abortion would be population control.

(19S) I believe that children should be allowed to at least know why the parent is refusing them something.

(32 SDW) Marriage should provide a sense of security for both the man and the woman. If neither feels secure there will be problems.

I feel that the black woman is not confused as to her direction, but more certain of what she does not want to accept in a relationship, thereby creating unrest rather than harmony.

For a defined period of time, it would be good for mother and child (if mother could remain at home to raise the child).

(35 SDW) Only a small percentage of men resent the successful career achievements of their black wives and only under certain circumstances.

I would marry a person of a different race if he appealed to me.

(45 SDW) Companionship would most likely be absent if financial security is not present.

Self-realization can be achieved either in marriage or a career or both combined; self-realization should not be defined by situations but by the person.

Younger black women may disregard potential partners' occupation, but they do so to their detriment. High rates of separation and divorce attest to this. The more mature woman is more conscious of the life-style she desires; thus, her mate's occupation would assume greater importance in the selection process.

Both individual and shared interests are vital to a successful marriage. Neither is of "secondary" importance.

(+50 SDW) Society continues to dictate roles for husbands and wives in spite of our changing social order. Our racist society makes it more difficult for the black male to achieve. Hence he is forever cast as an underachiever. This creates friction in a marriage...

Companionship is necessary in a marriage, but "poverty breeds contempt". Togetherness is all companionship becomes when there is a lack of funds.

(The assertion of a female's strengths in a situation where the husband cannot cope) is one of the greatest causes of divorce...

(60 SDW) Planned parenthood is essential.

(35M) Sexual compatibility is very important in a marriage but not the most important aspect of a good relationship.

(47M) I believe that the day of marriage is just about over. The practice of living together and walking away from it when you've had enough is far better than being tied together and hating each other.

(39M) I helped my husband through school (B.S., M.S., & Ph.D.), yet when I returned to school he did not encourage me or help me other than to baby sit.

(52M) Some women feel that having children will hold the husband in the home. I feel this is a sad mistake. Deferred families sometimes never happen. Families should work together and grow together. The government should not interfere with couples having children. The government cannot play God.

(46M) I believe a wife should take a separate vacation, not a husband.

Summary of Findings

In responding to the mate selection category of questions, middle class black women showed a tendency to ignore race and religion as obstacles in the mate selection process. Over half of the

women said they would not marry below their own social standing, and most of them showed a preference for mates who are financially stable. They also indicated that the mate's occupation might be a factor in their decision to marry the particular male involved. The women also indicated that they felt working wives have as much if not greater chance of succeeding in their marriages as non-working wives.

The study showed that middle class black women felt the economics of marriage were important in that not only should the male be financially stable, but that marriage should provide women with a greater sense of security than the unmarried state.

There were no findings to support the contention that marriage contributed to either improved physical health or better mental health. However, at least 25% of the women indicated that they were not quite sure in each case.

The responses showed that black women preferred the male to be designated as head of the household in the marital relationship, but the majority of the women agreed that they would assert their own strengths in situations where it appeared that the male was incapable of making decisions.

The women in the study also indicated by their responses that they would not adjust to the male's personality in order to make the marriage work but would maintain their individuality and personal

identities in the marital relationships. A very slight majority responded positively to the concept of welladefined sex roles in the marriage, and just less than half of the women agreed that the traditional role of women as homemakers is a thing of the past with slightly more than 10% of them undecided.

The women almost unanimously rejected sex as being either the most or the least important factor in marriage, and a large majority indicated that neither a husband's nor wife's extramarital sexual activities should be overlooked. Almost 100% of the women rejected the statement equating sexual intercourse with making love.

There was no majority opinion regarding the future of marriage as an institution in the future when the total group figures were examined. Forty-six per cent of the total group agreed, 29% were undecided and 25% disagreed that a decline in the number of black women who marry will occur.

The question of how the women view parenthood drew negative responses or indications of indecision on the part of most women; to support the finding, a large majority of the women replied positively to planned parenthood. However, the total group response to government intervention in parenting was practically unanimous in its rejection. Also, for the total group, the legalized abortion issue received a positive majority response with 26% of the women indecisive

on the topic. The total group responses revealed that middle class black women do not feel that having children should be delayed until one of the parents is able to remain in the home, and the women also indicated some support of children's rights by replying positively to the statement concerning the right of children to question parents.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of an available sample of middle class black women toward marriage and the family. The total group of respondents included ninety-four women of middle class and professional standing in the cities of Detroit and Chicago.

The women were administered an opinionnaire containing forty statements and an open-ended question designed to measure the feelings of the women concerning:

I Criteria for Mate Selection

II Economics of the Marital Relationship

III Advantages and Disadvantages of Marriage

IV Their Concept of Black Women's Roles in Marriage

V The Importance of Sex in Marriage

VI The importance of Children in Marriage.

Summary of Principal Findings

There were two variables in the study--age and marital status. On the issue of mate selection, the younger age groups took a more liberal view in their responses to the issues of race and religion, with the oldest age group responding more conservatively regarding religion and less so regarding race. The two older groups, however,

showed a tendency to be more selective in their choices based on social standing and occupation of the males, while the youngest group was split on social class as a criterion and in agreement with the two older groups on occupational status of the male.

With few exceptions, middle class black women of all ages prefer to marry financially well-established males; but the youngest group placed a higher value on companionship. These findings also repeat themselves when the marital status variable is examined. The single women's views coincided with the 18 to 25 year-olds, and the married or separated groups reflected views very similar to the older age groups. These coincidences probably occurred due to the fact that most of the young women were single, and most of the older respondents were either married or without their husbands.

The findings showed that most middle class black women of all ages and marital status are more committed to maintaining a feeling of self-hood than loss of identity through marriage and regard independence highly as is illustrated in their responses to the statements related to marital roles. They look to marriage to provide security but showed doubt that marriage could contribute to better physical or mental health. They also rejected marriage as the best mode of "self-realization". An exception to this rejection was the youngest group which showed that over half of them were not sure.

Certainty would be absent in this group since most of them were not married and a basis for decision was consequently absent.

The women for the most part agreed that the pursuit of individual interests were not of secondary importance when compared to shared interests in a marriage. Some women qualified their responses by stating in the open-ended question that individual interests were of equal importance to shared interests.

The older and married or separated groups showed a much higher tendency to assert their personal strengths over their husbands' if an occasion demanded than did the younger and single women, but all of the women indicated that the male should be the head of the household in the traditional family unit of husband, wife and child/children.

Responses showed that the women valued parenthood, but felt that planning was a key factor. Most agreed that legalized abortion was of value. Also, child-rearing practices for the majority of these women would include the recognition of the child's right to question the parent's decisions.

Conclusions

An examination of the responses to the opinionnaire in this study reveals a tendency of middle class black women to view marriage through a "Utopian haze". It showed a disregard for certain realities on the part of the women.

Beginning with the questions related to mate selection, 28% of marriage eligible women agreed that they would choose not to marry below their status. The key figure is the 36% undecided response of the young women; their failure to agree or disagree could be significant. Among the divorced or widowed women, the 69% disagreed response indicates a relatively negative attitude toward men who are not of the same social status as the women. There is no evidence that the response is based on past experience, but the women seem to have overlooked the shortage of eligible males of middle class status, as attested to by Hare and Hare, 1974; Ladner, 1977; and Tucker, 1980.

The respondents showed a preference for marriage to financially established males, yet the economic reality is that women have progressed financially more rapidly than their male counterparts (Poussaint, 1977). When required to respond to whether they would marry a person of another race, less than half of the women replied positively. Yet, the choices are narrower for black women (Becquaert, 1976; Tyson and Tyson, 1977; and Ladner, 1977). Unless these women compromise their expectations, it may become necessary for them to seek marriage outside their race or settle for some alternative to marriage. Thus, for the second category of questions relating to the economics of marriage, middle class black women have given responses that apparently are inconsistent with reality, a

conclusion further supported by the negative responses to whether the women would ignore the occupational status of a prospective mate.

In determining the attitudes of the women toward the advantages and disadvantages of marriage, the women did not seem to view marriage as very advantageous. Over half of the total group did not respond favorably to the concept of greater self-realization through marriage, nor did the majority agree that marriage improved their physical or mental well-being. There are many assumptions which could be made here.

Evidence in the literature supports the view that factors such as poverty and children increase stress in marital relations (Renne, 1977; Ladner, 1977; and Blood, 1972), but the responses of the women in this study seem to conflict with Verbrugge (1979) and Rushing (1979) in their conclusions that marriage can be a contributing factor to improved health. Similarly, Newkirk's (1974) assumption that marriage is advantageous to self-fulfillment is refuted by the majority of black women in this study.

The issue of marital roles contained questions designed to provide insight into role perception on the part of middle class black women. Findings supported other research which labeled black women as "independent" and "different" as discovered by Brown, Perry and Harburg (1977). These women apparently fit

into a mode described by Weigert and Hastings (1977) wherein marriage can be either an identity giver or identity taker. The attitude of middle class black women tends to support the identity loss factor since over 45% of them would not relinquish a career to marry a financially stable male, nor would they sacrifice personal interests for a marriage. Instead, the women apparently prefer to maintain an individuality based on self-reliance, a finding substantiated by responses to the implied sacrifice of career goal objectives and/or individual interests.

In this same category of marital roles, the most outstanding conflict was in the responses to recognition of the male as head of the household. Although 64% agreed with the concept, 77% would act in an opposite manner by asserting their personal strengths when it appeared the male was unable to do so. The key word in the related question is "appears" since it would be a value judgement of the female as to whether the male could actually cope with the given problem. To be assertive in the face of his apparent ineptitude would, in effect, damage rather than support his ego and undercut his role as head of the household or primary decision-maker. This finding concurs with the findings of most other researchers (Blood, 1972; Renne, 1974; Hare and Hare, 1974; and others). As one respondent stated in the open-ended question, this is probably one of the greatest contributing factors to the high rate

of divorce among blacks.

Middle class black women responded very favorably to the concept of combining marriage and a career. Over 88% of the total group gave negative responses to the statement that working wives have less chance of succeeding in their marriages than wives who do not work. Mott (1978) cited the progress black women have made in the job markets, and the findings in this study are supported by his research. Also, the findings on the attitudes of the black women in this study toward their roles as homemakers revealed that the women perceived that role as "passe", a result also discovered by Becquaert (1976). Becquaert's (1976) findings coincide with those in this research which conclude that black women have not joined forces with female liberationists in their movement. To the statement, "Recent trends in the 'liberation' of the female from traditional sex roles have confused the black woman's sense of direction in establishing and maintaining successful (happy) marital relations," 65% of the women disagreed. During informal discussions and in responses to the open-ended question, women pointed out that the female liberation movement was a "white woman's movement" and that they (blacks) had always been liberated. The attitude here is one of independence regardless of age or marital status.

The category of sexual importance in the marriage revealed that the middle class black woman may not be as sexually liberated

as some observers suppose. These women took a negative attitude toward extramarital sex on the part of the male or the female, a traditionalist view. They also did not place sex in the marriage as the most important factor but were equally negative in relegating sex to a least important position in their set of values.

Another traditional value was upheld by the responses to questions in the final category of statements or questions. There was an implied high value placed on parenthood by responses to the statement that children should only come into the marriage after one of the parents could remain at home to care for them. Over 60% of the women rejected deferred families, a finding that seems to place the value of parenthood high on the list of priorities for this group. The women did respond positively to planned parenthood. However, their responses could be interpreted as conformance to middle class values inherent in the trends toward smaller families and population control as reported in demographic studies done by Glick and Norton (1977).

The attitudes toward child-rearing practices appear to be liberal. Respondents were positive in their replies to the statement involving children's right to question the decisions of their parents. This is a change from the traditionally authoritarian role black parents once had and may be a further indication that middle class black women must be "assigned" the "same set of values as held by middle class

society" (newkirk, 1974, p. 53).

Implications

The data from this study imply a dichotomous attitude among middle class black women toward the social institutions of marriage and the family. They apparently hold in esteem many of the traditional middle class values of American society, yet they appear reluctant to relinquish many ethnic values they have practiced throughout the years, particularly female dominance in the home. While it is desirable that socially acceptable behavior be promoted in all races, the unique problems of racial bias and shortage of eligible middle class black males place black women in a position of having to choose alternatives to marriage in order to fulfill sex roles.

Interracial marriage is one alternative, but this choice may cause an already tenuous relationship between black males and black females to deteriorate even further.

A more serious and possibly deleterious implication is that women who are disenchanted with marriage will seek alternatives that have more widespread social impact. Cohabitation is one of these alternatives. The trend has been established already, as cited by Glick and Norton (1977).

> In 1977 there were almost 2 million Americans, or 957,000 couples, living together without being married,

> an increase of 83% in the past seven years compared to only 19% increase in the decade between 1960 and 1970 (PRB, 1978, p. 1).

Dissatisfaction with marriage may add to the phenomenal increase in divorce rates occurring lately. Again, Glick and Norton's (1977) studies are referred to. They calculate that:

> Thirty-eight per cent of all first marriages of women now in their twenties will end in divorce, if current rates continue. If divorces after remarriage are added, then approximately 40 per cent of all current and potential marriages will end in divorce (PRB, 1978, p. 3).

The obvious effect on children is that they will not have the benefit of both parents in the home. The demographers point out that only 45 per cent of black children were living with both parents in 1976 (Glick and Norton, 1977).

The propensity of black couples to propagate regardless of socioeconomic levels is supported by other demographic studies. The attitudes professed by the women in this study are examples of the conflicting views held by them when they expressed a belief in legalized abortion and planned parenthood but could see no reason to delay parenthood until they are prepared to devote themselves

to full-time parenting.

The implications of decreased numbers of men and women choosing to marry, marriages occurring later in the life of partners than has formerly been known and delayed child-bearing are seen by Glick and Norton (1977) as socially significant factors for future survival of marriage and the family.

Recommendations

From the data in this study, it is apparent that not enough is known about middle class black women's attitudes to make definitive statements relating to the women as a sub-group within the total social structure. Furthermore, the conflicting opinions of middle class black women in their attitudes indicate a need for definiteness and stability as alluded to by Katz (1967) when he stated that such attitudes are provided "by the norms in our culture...which give the otherwise perplexed individual ready-made attitudes for comprehending her universe (p. 345)". Additionally, there are still unanswered questions regarding whether these attitudes constitute a value system that can be applied to all black women or to all middle class women of whatever race.

It is recommended, therefore, that this study be repeated: 1) in a larger sample of middle class black women, 2) in a sample of middle class white women and 3) in black and white women of the lower and upper classes to confirm the validity of these results.

The results of these prospective studies may make it possible to redefine the cultural norms referred to by Katz (1967).

TABLE VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
(Reported in Percentages)

QUESTION	N=94 All Ages and Marital Status (Including Never Married)		
Criteria for Mate Selection	A	U	D
Same race?	22	11	67
Same religion?	26	16	58
Social Class Shouldn't be a Factor?	28	16	56
Social Class (man's higher)?	43	21	36
Social Class (man's lower)?	25	24	51
Ignore occupational status? (Generally)	18	7	75
Ignore occupational status? (Personally)	8	10	82
Marry outside race? (Personally)	46	29	25
Economics in the Marriage			
Man should be financially stable?	51	9	40
Black men resent wives' career achievements?	52	21	27
Companionship more important than money?	30	21	49
Working wives less maritally successful?	9	3	88
Sacrifice career for marriage upward?	31	21	48
Marriage should provide sense of security?	70	8	22
Self-realization through marriage?	21	25	54
Advantages and Disadvantages of Marriage			
Marry before 30?	19	5	76
Six month or more engagement period?	53	6	41
Co-habitation may be better?	34	14	52
Better physical health in marriage?	29	28	43
Better mental health in marriage?	29	30	41
No (re)marry because of personal freedom?	23	28	49
Future decline in number of black marriages?	46	29	25
Marital Roles			
Personal interests secondary in marriage?	40	12	48
Personal strengths asserted over husband's?	81	12	7
Man should head household?	65	7	28
Identity sacrifice for successful marriage?	8	10	82
Well-defined sex roles?	43	11	46
Confusion due to feminist movements (trends)?	17	18	65
Homemaker role 'passe'?	48	13	39
Separate vacations?	53	21	26
Importance of Sex in the Marriage			
Compatibility most important?	15	6	79
Compatibility least important?	3	11	86
Making love same as intercourse?	4	2	94
Man's infidelity should be overlooked?	3	6	91
Woman's infidelity should be overlooked?	4	7	89

Table VII -- Summary of Findings Continued

QUESTION	All Ages and Marital Status * (Including Never Married)		
Importance of Children in the Marriage	A	U	D
Children stablize marriages?	32	17	51
Planned parenthood is good?	73	13	14
Government should mandate family size?	0	10	90
Legalized abortion good?	53	26	21
Defer family for full time parenting?	24	15	51
Children's right to question parent decisions?	63	11	26

*N=94

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Becquaert, Lucia H. Single Women Alone and Together. New York: Beacon Press, 1976.

Bennett, Lerone, Jr. Before the Mayflower: A History of Black America. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., Inc., 1969.

Blood, Robert O. The Family. New York: The Free Press, 1972.

Blood, Robert O., and Wolfe, Donald M. Husbands and Wives: The Dynamics of Married Living. New York: Free Press, 1960.

Bonner, Thomas N., Hill, Duane W. and Wilber, George L. The Contemporary World. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1960.

Borgese, Elisabeth Mann. "Woman: Nurture Makes the Difference." In Great Ideas Today, edited by Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler. Chicago: William Benton, 1966.

Cervantes, Lucius F. "The Changing Role of Woman: A Biosocial Interpretation." In The Great Ideas Today, edited by Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler. Chicago: William Benton, 1966.

Dannett, Sylvia G. L. Profiles of Negro Womanhood. Vol. I 1619-1900. Chicago: Educational Heritage, Inc., 1964.

Duberman, Lucile. "Why People Marry." In Marriage and Its Alternatives. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.

Freeman, Linton C. "Marriage Without Love." In Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family, edited by Robert F. Winch and Graham B. Spanier, (4th Edition). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

Furnas, J. C. The Road to Harper's Ferry. New York: William Sloane Associates, 1959.

Glick, Paul C. and Norton, Arthur J. "Perspectives on Upturn in Divorce and Remarriage." In Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family, edited by Robert F. Winch and Graham B. Spanier,

(4th Edition). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

Goode, William J. The Family. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

Hegel, George W. F. "The Philosophy of Right." In Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 46, edited by Robert M. Hutchins. Chicago: William Benton, 1952.

Heer, David M. "Negro-White Marriage in the United States." In Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family, edited by Robert F. Winch and Graham B. Spanier. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

Hobart, Charles W. "Changing the Family: Trends and Proposals." In The Changing Family: Its Functions and Future, edited by David A. Schulz. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

Hollingshead, August B. "Cultural Factors in the Selection of Marriage Mates." In Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family, edited by Robert F. Winch and Graham B. Spanier. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

Katz, Daniel. "The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes." In Current Perspectives in Social Psychology, edited by Edwin P. Hollander and Raymond G. Hunt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Liebow, Elliot. Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men. Boston: Little, Brown, 1967.

Lyness, Judith L.; Lipetz, Milton E.; and Davis, Keith E. "Living Together: An Alternative to Marriage." In Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family, edited by Robert F. Winch and Graham B. Spanier. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

Moynihan, Daniel P. The Negro Family: The Case for National Action. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965.

Newkirk, Gwendolyn. "Values in Family Living in Black America." In Marriage and the Family in the Modern World, edited by Ruth S. Cavan, (Readings). New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1974.

Nye, F. Ivan. Role Structure and Analysis of the Family. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976.

Ploski, Harry A.; and Brown, Roscoe C., editors, The Negro Almanac. New York: The Bellwether Publishing Co., Inc., 1967.

Rainwater, Lee; Coleman, Richard P.; and Handel, Gerald. Workingman's Wife: Her Personality, World and Lifestyle. New York: Oceana, 1959.

Renne, Karen. "Correlates of Dissatisfaction in Marriage." In Selected Studies in Marriage and the Family, edited by Robert F. Winch and Graham B. Spanier. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977.

Rossi, Alice S. "Transition to Parenthood." In Marriage and the Family in the Modern World, Edited by Ruth Shone Cavan. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1974.

Scanzoni, John. Sex Roles, Women's Work, and Marital Conflict: A Study of Family Changes. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Co., 1978.

Journals

Brown, Prudence; Perry, Lorraine; and Harburg, Ernest. "Sex Role Attitudes and Psychological Outcomes for Black and White Women Experiencing Marital Dissolution." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1977, 39:549-560.

Elder, G., Jr. "Structural Variations in the Child Rearing Relationship." Sociometry, 1962, 25:247.

Farley, Reynolds and Hermalin, Albert I. "Family Stability: A Comparison of Trends between Blacks and Whites." American Sociological Review, 1971, 36:1-17.

Gillespie, Marcia; editor. "What Sex Means to You." Essence, 1979, 9:42-46; 98.

Gittelson, Natalie. Happily Married Women: How They Got that Way, How They Stay that Way. McCall's, 1980, 107:27.

Glick, Paul C. and Norton, Arthur J. "Marrying, Divorcing and Living Together in the U.S. Today." Population Bulletin, Washington, D.C. Population Reference Bureau, 1977, 3:1-3.

Goode, William J. "Illegitimacy, Anomie, and Cultural Penetration." American Sociological Review, 1961, 26:910-925.

Gove, Walter R. "Sex, Marital Status and Psychiatric Treatment: A Research Note." Social Forces, 1979, 58:89-93.

Gove, Walter R. and Hughes, Michael. "Sex Differences in Morbidity and Mortality." American Sociological Review, 1979, 44:126-146.

Hannan, Michael T.; Brandon, Nancy T.; and Groenveld, L.P. "Income Maintenance Experiment." American Journal of Sociology, 1977, 82:1186-1189.

Harlow, W. "Sexual Liberation Doesn't Always Mean Freedom." Interview of Diana Trilling. Working Woman, 1979, 4:47-53.

Hobbs, Daniel F., Jr. and Wimbish, Hane M. "Transition to Parenthood by Black Couples." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1977, 39:677-688.

Howe, Ruth-Arlene W. "Divorce: Critical Issues for Legal and Mental Health Professionals." The Urban and Social Change Review, 1977, 10:15-20.

Jacoby, Susan. "Time to Yourself: Must It Threaten Your Marriage?" McCall's, 1980, 107:

Johnson, Jane. "The Pros and Cons of Parenthood." Ebony, 1977. 32:33-42.

Ladner, Joyce. "The Black Woman Today." Ebony, 1977, 32:33-42.

Lasswell, Marcia and Lobsenz, Norman. "Can Men and Women Be Just Friends?" McCall's, 1980, 107:89-90.

Moroney, Robert M. "The Need for a National Family Policy." The Urban and Social Change Review, 1977, 10:10-14.

Moynihan, Daniel P. "The State, the Church, and the Family." The Urban & Social Change Review, 1977, 10:7-9.

Newcomb, Paul R. "Cohabitation in America: An Assessment of Consequences." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1979, 41:597-603.

Novak, Michael. "The Family Out of Favor." The Urban and Social Change Review, 1977, 10:3-6.

Pearlin, Leonard I. and Johnson, Joyce S. "Marital Status, Life-Strains and Depression." American Sociological Review, 1977, 42:704-715.

Philliber, William W. and Hiller, Dana V. "A Research Note: Occupational Attainments and Perceptions of Status Among Working Wives." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1979, 41:59-62.

Pifer, Alan. "Women Working: Toward a New Society." The Urban and Social Change Review, 1978, 11:3-11.

Poussaint, Alvin and Poussaint, Ann A. "Black Women/Black Men." Ebony, 1977, 32:160-162.

Rainwater, Lee. "Some Aspects of Lower Class Sexual Behavior." Journal of Social Issues, 1966, 22:98.

Richardson, John G. "Wife Occupational Superiority and Marital Troubles: An Examination of the Hypothesis." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1979, 41:63-69.

Roebuck, Julian and Spray, S. Lee. "The Cocktail Lounge: A Study of Heterosexual Relations in Public Organization." American Journal of Sociology, 1967, 72:388-395.

Rushing, William A. "Marital Status and Mental Disorder: Evidence in Favor of a Behavioral Model." Social Forces, 1979, 58:540-552.

Sorrel, Phillip and Sorrel, Lorna; editors. "What Does Sex Mean in a Loving Relationship?" Redbook, 1980, 154:31.

Tucker, Leota M. "Coping with Loneliness." Essence, 1980, 10:66, 84-88.

Tyson, Richard and Tyson, Joanne. "Sex and the Black Woman." Ebony, 1977, 32:103-111.

Verbrugge, Lois M. "Marital Status and Health." Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1979, 41:267-284.

Weigert, Andrew J. and Hastings, Ross. "Identity Loss, Family and Social Change." Journal of Sociology, 1977, 82:1171.